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Vedic, Sanskrit, and Prakrit. By WALTER PETERSEN,
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It will be the object of this paper to point out some difficulties in the ordinary view of the relation of the Vedic and Classical Sanskrit to the popular or Prakrit dialects, and, if possible, to suggest another theory which will avoid these difficulties. And in making this attempt, instead of starting with a discussion of "What is Sanskrit?", a procedure which seems to have led to no definite result¹, I shall begin with the consideration of the question as to what is "Mittelindisch" or Prakrit², hoping that if a satisfactory solution of this question is reached, the problem of the origin of Sanskrit will be materially simplified.

The normal view of the relation of Prakrit and Pali to the Vedic and Sanskrit is that suggested by the word "Mittelindisch" itself, namely that Prakrit is the direct lineal descendant of "Altindisch" or the language of the oldest stage of the transmission³.

And since this oldest stage is found in two distinct forms, namely the Vedic and Classical Sanskrit, the inference is that Prakrit is derived either from the Vedic language⁴ or the Classical⁵, or at least from popular languages to which the Vedic or Classical Sanskrit was related like all literary lan-

¹ Cf. e. g. the widely divergent opinions of the British scholars in the JRAS. 1904. 457—487 on the article of Rapson "In what degree was Skt. a spoken language", ib. p. 435 ff.

² For want of a better term Prakrit below is often used to include the earlier or Pali stage of "Mittelindisch" as well as the later stage to which it is ordinarily applied.

³ See the language tree of Thumb, *Handbuch des Skt.* 19.

⁴ See notes 2 and 3 p. 415.

⁵ So Hofer, *De Prakrito Dialecto* 8; Lassen, *Institutiones Linguae Prakritae* 25 f.; Monier Williams, *Nalopākhyānam* Intr. p. V; Jacobi, *KZ.* 24. 614.

guages to the nearest popular dialects from which they are taken. The latter alternative, however, we may dismiss once for all. The number of phonetic as well as morphological peculiarities¹ which are common to the Vedic and Prakrit but unknown to Sanskrit, prove definitely that Prakrit is much nearer to the Vedic than to the Classical Sanskrit, and that direct origin from the latter is no longer to be thought of. There remains the supposition that Prakrit is derived either from Vedic dialects² or from contemporary dialects which are close to the Vedic in character³.

To this latter view, however, there are grave and unanswerable chronological difficulties on every hand. In the first place, it is a well-known fact that the Vedic hymns already contain a number of Prakritisms⁴, forms which distinctly belong to the "middle-Indian" period and do not represent the normal status of the Vedic sounds, but are exceptional cases and consequently borrowings from a different dialect. Thus Wackernagel, loc. cit., quotes as examples words with a cerebral, e. g. *kāṭā* "Tiefe": *kartā* "Grube"; words with *ṇ* (< *n*), e. g. *maṇi* "Perle"; words with *ṣ* (< *rs*, *rs*, *ls*, *ls*), e. g. *AV. kaṣati* "kratzen": Lith. *kařszti*; *prāuga* = **práyuga*, *títāu* = **títasu*, etc. To quote Wackernagel himself: "Daneben (sc. der priesterlichen Sprache) aber war (wenigstens in bestimmten Volksschichten) schon zu der Zeit, da die uns erhaltenen Hymnen entstanden, eine Sprache gebräuchlich, die über jene priesterliche Sprache weit hinaus entwickelt war, und die Haupteigenheiten der ältesten Phase des Mittelindisch, der sogenannten Palistufe, an sich trug". The conclusion therefore can not be avoided that during the period of composition of the Vedic hymns two distinct groups of Indian dialects were developed and separated by an uncrossable gulf⁵,

¹ So e. g. the Nom. Pl. ending Ved. *-āsaḥ* = Prkt. *-āho*, Instr. Ved. *-ebhiḥ* instead of *-aiḥ* = Prkt. *ehim*, *ḷ* and *ḷh* for *ḍ* and *ḍh* in both Veda and Prakrit. Cf. Fischel, *Gram. d. Prakrit Spr.* 4 f.; Franke, *Pali u. Skt.* 150; Thumb, op. cit. 19.

² Cf. Weber, *Ind. Stud.* 2. 110 f.; Franke, loc. cit.

³ Cf. Bradke, *ZDMG.* 40. 673 ff.; Thumb, loc. cit.

⁴ Cf. Wackernagel, *Ai. Gram.* 1. XVII.

⁵ Squarely opposed to this, but certainly not justifiable, is the statement of F. W. Thomas, *JRAS.* 1904. 461, that during the centuries preceding the Christian era Sanskrit and the vernaculars (Prakrit) were so

on the one hand the priestly language of the Veda, on the other hand the popular dialects, which later became "Pali" and "Prakrit"¹. From this fact it follows again that Prakrit can not be a direct lineal descendant of the Vedic of the hymns or of a contemporary dialect which was close to the Vedic in its character.

If, then, Prakrit is nevertheless derived from the Vedic, it must have been at a time considerably antedating the hymns themselves. And here the question immediately arises whether time enough had elapsed since the separation of the Indian and Persian dialects so that such large differences as exist between Vedic and the earliest "Pali" could have been developed in addition to the equally large ones between the Avestan and Vedic. As Bradke, ZDMG. 40. 672, remarks, it is a question of how long a period we allow to have elapsed between the period of Indo-Iranian unity and the Veda. If we place the latter long after the former, there is nothing impossible about assuming that the popular dialects had been developed in Vedic times and that the Vedic poets borrowed certain words from these vernaculars. Now Bradke himself believes that the time could have been amply sufficient. He declares that the oldest stages of the Indian and Iranian languages are no closer to each other than Italian and French, and yet these two languages are fifteen centuries apart². He seems to believe that in the time thus gained it is possible for the old Aryan language to have developed successively first into "Altindisch" and then into the earliest stages of "Pali". But this argument really contains a *circulus vitiosus*. In the first place, to those who maintain that the Vedic period can not have been too long after the period of Indo-Iranian unity because of the close resemblance of the earliest Indian and Iranian he interposes the objection that Italian and French are no farther apart and yet it took fifteen hundred years to

close to each other as to preclude comparison with Latin even in countries where Romance languages were spoken, unless indeed he means only the most developed stages of the Romance languages.

¹ When Rapson, JRAS. 1904. 445, therefore maintains that Prakrit can not be traced even to Yāska (about 500 B. C.), he would be undoubtedly wrong if he had not meant by Prakrit merely the language in the exact form in which it was later known by that name.

² ZDMG. 40. 669.

develop the difference, that consequently it might take just as long to develop the difference between Indian and Iranian. In the second place, into these fifteen hundred years thus gained is to be put also the development of Pali from "Alt-indisch", presumably on the ground that fifteen hundred years would be amply sufficient for even such large dialectical differences to arise! First a large period of time is claimed as being probably needed to develop comparatively small differences, then this large period is in turn used as proof that comparatively large differences may have developed in the same. But we could as well counterargue that six hundred years are needed to develop the Classical Sanskrit from the Vedic¹, and the difference is very slight, how much more would we then expect for the large difference between either Classical Sanskrit or Vedic and even the earliest stages of Pali? Adding to this the fifteen hundred years assumed by Bradke for the development of Vedic from primitive Aryan, how many milleniums after the period of Indo-Iranian unity would the Veda be placed? And the earlier we place the latter the worse the difficulty would become for the Classical Sanskrit. If we accept Jacobi's date for the Rigveda we should have to assume at least five milleniums to account for the comparatively slight difference between the Avestan and the Classical Sanskrit. When, however, we omit precarious arguments of this kind, and seek other criteria, we find that it is really very hard to believe that the Rigveda was enough later than the period of Indo-Iranian unity to account for the large change from primitive Aryan to Pali; for the fact that the Rigveda is yet full of reminiscences of the conquest of the Panjāb, and that the larger part of the later Aryan India had not yet been settled², would make it exceedingly improbable that the Indian Aryans had been in the Panjāb a very long time before the hymns were composed. We would hardly expect a conquering people suddenly to stop for centuries in their process of expansion, and then to resume it later. Nor would it be credible that a very long period had elapsed between the time of Indo-Iranian unity and the conquest of the Panjāb. As long as the Indian Aryans dwelt together

¹ So Grierson, JRAS. 1904. 477, though for a different purpose.

² Cf. Macdonell, Hist. Skt. Lit. 139 ff.; Thumb, op. cit. 14.

with the Iranians toward the northwest of the Panjāb, they were virtually one people¹, and only after they separated in order that one part might invade India did large differences of language develop. The difficulty then becomes greater and greater: it is impossible for me to conceive how Prakrit could have had time to develop from "Altindisch" in the usual way at a time when the Veda evidently shows that it must have existed.

But let us assume for argument's sake that there nevertheless was ample time, in what relation then would we conceive the language of the Rigveda to stand to these vernaculars? The first alternative that might occur to us is that Vedic, like the later Classical Sanskrit, was already a petrified language, kept alive only by the priests and literary men. But to this idea there are several grave objections. In the first place the character of the Vedic language and literature is such that scarcely any one has seriously doubted that it was close to the living language of the time of the poets.² There may have been dialect mixture and archaisms and poetic peculiarities of diction, and the actual spoken language differed from that of the hymns as the Greek vernaculars of the Homeric age differed from the language of the Homeric poets, or as the popular languages to which any literary dialects owe their origin differ from the latter, but no more. Moreover, if Vedic was a dead language when the hymns were composed, how can we assume that this old language escaped complete obliteration in so long a time? A dead language is perpetuated only in its literature, and when it dies before a literature is produced, as it would have to in this case, it will be forgotten before it has a chance to perpetuate itself. It is

¹ How close this period probably is to the Vedic can be seen from the retention of intervocalic *s* instead of the change to *h*, one of the most characteristic changes of the Persian group, in a word identical with the Vedic *Násatya* found in the recently discovered inscription of Boghazköi. The retention of the *s* in the Iranian word thus points virtually to the period of Indo-Iranian unity, and that about 1800 B. C. On the other hand few would put the Rigveda much later than 1200 B. C. Cf. Keith, JRAS. 1909. 1100 ff. Like Keith, I assume that E. Meyer, not Jacot, has drawn the correct chronological conclusions from the inscription.

² Cf. Whitney, *Skt. Gram.* § XV; Wackernagel, *op. cit.* XVII; Macdonell, *op. cit.* 20; Grierson, JRAS. 1904. 471.

thus evident that at least the beginning of the literary Vedic period must have antedated the petrification of the language. But there is another and still more conclusive reason why the Vedic of the hymns could not have been a dead language. There is no one who could affirm that the art of writing was known at such an early date.¹ Now let us try to picture to ourselves how this older language (supposing it to have been established as a fashionable language so early) could have been transmitted orally. It might be possible for traditions as to new and old forms and phonetic doubles to be transmitted from one generation to another by means of oral instructions; for such changes are recognized by every one most easily, since the new and old forms continue to exist side by side, at least temporarily. But when we come to sound changes that do not result in phonetic doubles, particularly the spontaneous unconditioned sound changes, the question is altogether different. These are so gradual that no one notices the fact that he is pronouncing a certain sound differently than formerly or differently than the older members of the linguistic community. It follows that a consciousness of change never appears,² and that the old pronunciation thus will no longer be a norm with which to compare the new, since the whole community will keep so close together that no one notices a difference, and when the end of the development has finally been reached the old original pronunciation, no matter how different from the new one,³ will be forgotten with no possibility of recovery. In case of a written language directions for the pronunciation of certain letters might reveal the change to later generations, but in a language which is spoken only, there is no possibility of establishing a previous sound change of this kind except by comparative philology. Thus the change of I. E. *o* to Germanic *a* has been so universal⁴ that not a single trace of the old pronunciation could possibly have existed to the speak-

¹ Cf. Macdonell, *op. cit.* 15 f., who quotes Buehler for the date 800 B. C. for the introduction of writing.

² Cf. Delbrück, *Einleitung*⁴ 154 f.

³ Every new nuance created in this way in fact displaces the older one. Cf. Sievers, *Phonetik*⁵ § 728.

⁴ Universality in fact is a characteristic of all gradual changes. Cf. Sievers, *op. cit.* § 731.

ers of the language after it had taken place, and since it was a gradual change, even those that lived while it took place were unconscious of it. In the same way Skt. *n* became Prakrit *ṇ* spontaneously¹ and under all circumstances (except before dental stops), and there was no way for the speaker of the latter sound to find out that he was pronouncing a different sound than his ancestors. But not only in case of spontaneous sound changes, but everywhere where no phonetic doubles result the old pronunciation is lost beyond recovery just as soon as the new is established. So it is with the dropping of the *y* in *prāuga* < *prāyuga*, or with the change of *rt>t*, *rs>ṣ*, etc. The development of all of these new pronunciations should have completely obliterated the old, if really, as is claimed, Vedic and Prakrit were successive steps in the development of the same language. The existence of Prakrit forms with the above mentioned peculiarities in the Rīgveda proves conclusively therefore from this point of view also that the two can not have been chronologically successive stages of one and the same language.

It follows that Vedic and Prakrit are sister dialects instead of being related as mother to daughter. In some way or other they must have been differentiated from their common ancestor, so that both could continue to exist side by side. It is obvious, however, that this differentiation can not have been local, i. e. Vedic and Prakrit can not have been contemporaneous dialects which arose in different localities; for it is incredible that all people in one section of the country should be so conservative in their pronunciation that they continued to speak a language very close to the primitive Aryan, while in other places, near by and not separated by any linguistic barrier whatsoever, they were so prone to innovations that it would appear as though the language they spoke was immeasurably a more recent or modern stage than that of the former. We should in vain look for analogies to this. Evidently the cause of the differentiation must be sought in different social strata of the same communities, one a strongly conservative

¹ In the light of the following these changes were not gradual, but due to the substitution of one sound for the other. Here we argue from the standpoint of those who maintain that Prakrit is a direct descendant of Vedic. If that be true, these changes must be gradual.

element, another offering no opposition to the tendency to innovation. At first sight this postulate, however, would seem to lead to the view held by Wackernagel and quoted above, namely that Vedic was merely a priestly language, jealously guarded by the priestly aristocracy in its pristine purity, while the natural development of the language resulted in the popular dialects. To this view, however, the objection will also hold that this presupposes a consciousness of difference, while on the other hand this very theory would presuppose that those characteristics of Prakrit which were already developed in Vedic times were largely due to spontaneous sound changes,¹ of which the priests no less than the common people must have been unconscious even while they were in the process of becoming. Whatever theory accounts for the difference between Vedic and Prakrit must show how the differentiation could take place through causes not controlled by the human will.

This as well as all the other above mentioned difficulties will disappear if we assume that Vedic and Prakrit were caste-languages from the beginning, and that the differences originated with the differences between the castes. And since the origin of the castes was intimately connected with the difference between Aryan and not-Aryan, we may say that Vedic was the language of the higher or Aryan castes,² while Prakrit was the language of the lower or non-Aryan castes. As the old Aryans invaded the Indian peninsula and conquered certain aboriginal tribes, they would impose their language upon those whom they enslaved³ and which consequently formed a part of their society.⁴ But since these black aborigines had organs of speech as well as linguistic habits that differed widely from those of the Aryan invaders, they were unable to learn the language in the same form as the one in which it was spoken by their conquerors, and it was modified to suit their own characteristics in much the same way as the

¹ Cf. foot-note p. 420.

² Cf. Baden-Powell, JRAS. 1899. 328, who states that the middle and lower castes were either not Aryan at all or badly mixed, while the higher castes were predominantly Aryan.

³ Cf. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen* 101.

⁴ Cf. Oldenberg, ZDMG. 51. 275: "Schon das *rigved.* Altertum hat die dunkelfarbigen Aboriginen nicht allein als Feinde, sondern auch als der arischen Gemeinschaft attachierte Unterworfenen gekannt".

American negro has modified the English language through his own physiological and mental peculiarities. And just as many peculiarities of the negro dialect are common to the whole large area of the South or his original American home, since the peculiarities which cause these aberrations are common to the whole race, just so a number of phonetic changes in Prakrit were common to all of the widely scattered areas where these popular dialects were spoken, since here also common racial peculiarities would cause common effects. And since these peculiarities primarily affect the phonological aspect of a language, it is intelligible that the Prakrit peculiarities in the Veda are exclusively phonological.¹ Moreover, since these sound-changes from primitive Aryan to the earliest Prakrit were not due to gradual change of pronunciation, but to the substitution of one sound for another, if this theory is correct, we need not expect larger periods of time to account for such a thoroughgoing change of phonetic aspect, and it is therefore not surprising that Prakrit and Vedic should have been virtually coexistent not only from the beginning of the transmission, but ever since the Aryans first invaded India and began enslaving the aborigines.

The conclusion that the phonetic character of the Prakrit dialects is due to imposing the Aryan language upon an inferior race is further strengthened by the character of the sound changes. Franke, *Pali und Sanskrit* 141 ff., calls attention to the fact that many peculiarities common to all "Pali" are similar to the mistakes of children. The same assimilation or simplification of consonant groups, the same substitution of familiar for unfamiliar sounds is common to both. Franke compares e. g. from the German: *tüschen* for *zwischen*, *woore* for *Worte*, *aam* for *Arm*, *golle* for *Golde*, *bume* for *Blume*, *daitipf* for *Bleistift*. This want of discrimination between different sounds, usually characteristic of childhood, is just what we would expect of a race inferior in intelligence learning a language so largely different from its own.² In

¹ Cf. Wackernagel, *op. cit.* XVII: „Keine sichere Spuren mittelindischer Formenbildung sind (sc. im Veda) erhalten”.

² It is of importance that those Skt. sounds for which others are substituted in Prakrit are largely those which to a great extent are characteristic of Sanskrit, and so probably would not be known to the non-Aryans. Thus, *r*, *ṛ*, *l*, *āi*, *āu*, and *ḥ* are all lacking in Prakrit.

fact the latter factor alone might cause similar changes even in case of a people of high intelligence, as can be seen particularly by a study of borrowed proper names. Thus in all of the following Greek borrowings from the Egyptian certain unfamiliar sounds or combinations of sounds have been replaced by sequences which were familiar to the Greek: Pa-Uat't became *Βουτώ*, Chufu became *Σούφης*, *Σαῶφης* or even *Χέονψ*, MeNKA-URA became *Μυκερῖνος*, Bokenrenf became *Βόγχωρις* (*Βόκχωρις*), SChBaK became *Σαβάκων*, UaHABRA became *Ἀπρίης*, AAHMeS became *Ἀμασις*.

If the above explanation of the origin of Prakrit is once accepted the problem as to the origin of the Classical Sanskrit becomes much simplified. There is no longer any necessity for assuming that a certain locality was so much more conservative than other neighboring ones that it was enabled to retain a language with such old characteristics,¹ while all other communities were many centuries ahead in the development of their speech. Classical Sanskrit was rather the direct lineal descendant not of the Vedic² in its literary form,³ but of the spoken dialects of the Vedic age, which differed from it only very slightly and may with propriety, as they are below, be designated as "Vedic". It was natural after the difference between Vedic and Prakrit had once been developed, that the old Aryan aristocracy of priests and soldiers should be proud of their language, which formed one of the principal distinctions between themselves and the despised conquered Dāsas, that they should therefore guard it most jealously from all change. Since, however, the Aryan speakers of the Vedic dialects continually had practical relations with the enslaved speakers of the Prakrits, it became necessary that they should have an acquaintance with Prakrit also, and sometimes, perhaps, they would even condescend to use it themselves, e. g. to make a command clearer. In this way there was a bridge

¹ Cf. Franke, BB. 17. 73, Pali u. Skt. 88; Rapson, JRAS. 1904. 450 ff

² So Franke, BB. 17. 82; Rapson, loc. cit. According to our view the Vedic had only one direct descendant and did not split up into two streams, as is claimed by Weber, Ind. Stud. 2. 110 f.; Grierson, JRAS. 1904. 472.

³ The absence in Skt. of the Vedic change of intervocalic *q* > *l* shows that the former is not directly descended from the dialect of the hymns. Cf: Thumb, Hdb. d. Skt. 91.

by which the Prakrit could gradually encroach on the Vedic or Sanskrit. Those Aryans who were less fortunate and did not succeed in becoming a part of the aristocracy gradually lost their racial pride and came to use the Prakrit language exclusively. In the same way the Aryan women, whose more menial duties brought them into more continual and closer contact with the lower classes, gradually let the Prakrit take the place of their pure Aryan mother tongue. In the beginning, however, it was not thus. All the Aryans, women¹ as well as men, spoke the pure Aryan language when the enslaved Dāsas first tried to learn the language of their conquerors.

As the circle of the speakers of the original Vedic languages became more and more narrow, they more and more took upon themselves the character of polite languages, with the result that the conservatism of the speakers also increased, and Vedic gradually became Classical Sanskrit. In this way is explained both the continuity of development between Vedic and Sanskrit in literature, which is the unanswerable objection against those who maintain that Sanskrit was a late artificial product and never was a spoken language,² and at the same time the growing stability of the same, with the proscription of all new formations.³ As in all polite languages, the speakers, who prided themselves on the correctness of their speech, sought for norms which should insure them correct principles of speaking, and this on the one hand led to the stationary nature of the Sanskrit, since all new formations are, of course, to begin with mistakes, on the other hand it led to the study of the grammar, which ended in the canonization of the whole grammatical system by Pāṇini,⁴ after which the language became permanently crystallized and no longer showed even a semblance of growth.

The above view, then, agrees on the one hand with those who maintain that Sanskrit was in origin not only a living language like any other polite language,⁵ but even a vernac-

¹ Cf. Ludwig, *Rigveda* 3. 44 f.

² Cf. Franke, *BB.* 17. 86; Rapson, *JRAS.* 1904. 441.

³ Cf. Wackernagel, *op. cit.* XXIII.

⁴ Cf. Franke, *BB.* 17. 80.

⁵ That Sanskrit was a spoken language, but not really a living language is maintained by Grierson, *JRAS.* 1904. 472. Similarly M. Senart, quoted p. 471 of the above. Dr. Grierson's statement (p. 476) that Skt.

ular, though only of certain strata of society, but by these it was not learned as an additional language to their own Prakrit vernacular,¹ but it was rather an inheritance from ages long past, while originally, if these persons also spoke Prakrit, it was the latter that was learned as a second language. On the other hand, in course of time the growing ascendancy of the Prakrits with all except the haute-volée may have caused this condition to have been reversed, and at any rate Sanskrit became more and more stereotyped until it may properly be said to have become a dead language.² This was, however, an exceedingly gradual development, mainly due to natural causes, though perhaps hastened by Pāṇini's canonization, and it would be impossible to fix upon a single point in time and to say its life ended here even if we were in possession of all the facts of the history of the language. Its development from the Vedic moreover was also a natural development, by an ultra-conservative society, it is true, but yet a development from which even sound change was not altogether excluded, as Wackernagel, loc. cit., maintains; for on the one hand he himself mentions the change of iy to y and of uv to v, on the other hand he has failed to point out the probability of certain sound changes which do not appear in the spelling, sc. the change of I. E. ai (doubtless still so pronounced in the early Vedic period) to ē,³ similarly of au to ō, āi with long ā

could never have been a living language because it had to borrow or imitate Prakrit words for objects of every-day life, is not well taken. In the ordinary life of the Sanskrit-speaking aristocrats there was no call for words designating every-day objects, and when they were needed Sanskrit naturally borrowed from the Prakrit or language of the common people, in the same way as every living language uses borrowed words for ideas hitherto unfamiliar. As well might we argue that the Germanic languages are dead because many words designating objects which are now familiar are Latin borrowings.

¹ Cf. Grierson, p. 480 of the above.

² Cf. Rhys Davids, *Buddha* Dec. 1903 p. 254 f.

³ The fact that the *Pratiśākhya*s classify e and o as diphthongs, even though their rules for pronunciation imply simple sounds, together with their treatment in euphonic changes, implies that they were true diphthongs in the Vedic period. The *Pratiśākhya*s must have received a tradition in this respect, and this tradition certainly could not have antedated the Veda, since grammatical studies originated in the very desire to interpret the Veda. Cf. Whitney, *Skt. Gram.* § 28 a; Macdonell, op. cit. 38 f.

to ai¹ with short a, similarly āu to au, and finally the thoroughgoing change of accentuation from the Vedic accent to that of the Classical Sanskrit, which is pointed out by Wackernagel himself, op. cit. 296 f. All of these changes are certainly phonetic changes and point to a living spoken language.

If Sanskrit was the only direct lineal descendant of the Vedic and in turn of the original language of the first Aryan settlers of India, it was not necessarily a local dialect, but we should a priori expect that wherever there was an Aryan people in the ascendant we would find the Sanskrit language or some language differing from it only by minor dialectic variations spoken by the kings and priests with their racial pride in their Aryan blood; it is to be expected that Sanskrit was spoken as a caste language throughout the whole Aryan territory of India. When therefore it is maintained e. g. by Macdonell that "there is no doubt that in the second century B. C. Sanskrit was actually spoken in the whole country called by Sanskrit writers Āryāvarta, or 'Land of the Aryans', which lies between the Himālaya and the Vindhya range", the statement is in exact accord with our theory.

These statements, however, must not be construed to mean that Sanskrit in the very form in which it occurs in literature was the vernacular of the men of the upper castes in all of the vast territory of Āryāvarta. Largely, of course, the same conservatism that kept the language so nearly stationary during such a long period also prevented the development of dialectic peculiarities, but yet there must have been some of them. The actual literary Sanskrit is no doubt related to these different spoken Sanskrit dialects just as any other literary language is related to the popular dialects. One or the other of them, by means of literary, religious, or political ascendancy,² became the norm to which the speakers of related dialects everywhere were expected to conform, with the result that it displaced all others, which was all the easier because the dialects displaced were themselves fashionable languages, and not, as e. g. in German, popular dia-

¹ When e was still ai, ai must have been āi with long ā, otherwise the two would have been indistinguishable and treated alike. Cf. Whitney, op. cit. § 28 b.

² Cf. Rapson, p. 451 of the above mentioned article.

lects, the speakers of which largely had no sympathy with this process of normalization. Moreover, we must bear in mind that the languages displaced could have differed from the language now known as Classical Sanskrit in but a minimal degree, and that it was not the displacing of the real popular dialects of Prakrit by the polite language, which was so different as to nearly exclude mutual intelligibility. While therefore the arguments of Franke¹ and Rapson² to establish a narrower region as the original home of Sanskrit may be perfectly valid, it must always be borne in mind that they concern only that particular form of the language which appears in literature, but that other closely related almost identical dialects existed in almost all Āryāvarta from the beginning. It may have happened occasionally, of course, that the pure Aryan speech in a certain locality died out altogether because of the operating of the same forces which caused the poorer Aryans and the women to give it up, but on the whole the racial pride of the aristocracy was too strong a factor to let us assume that it died out everywhere except in a narrowly circumscribed locality, from where it then had to start out to reconquer all the territory lost before.

It cannot be my object here to discuss anew the question as to the interpretation of the fact that Pali appears in inscriptions before Sanskrit, or what is the explanation of this "break in the continuity" of development. My only concern is to show that the results of Franke's book "Pali und Sanskrit" do not necessarily conflict with the above theory. According to op. cit. 49 the results of Franke's examination of inscriptions show "daß auch spätestens im 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr. und noch geraume Zeit danach auf der vorderindischen Halbinsel unterhalb des Himālaya und auf Ceylon als allgemeine Landessprache der arischen Bevölkerung kein irgendwie geartetes Sanskrit in irgend einer Provinz vorhanden war, sondern erst allmählich aufgekommen ist." The emphasis should be on the "allgemeine"; i. e. Sanskrit, as shown above, was indeed never a universal vernacular, but a caste language from the beginning, which explains the fact that the

¹ Pali u. Skt. 88.

² JRAS. 1904. 451 f.

inscriptions, which were meant to be understood by as many people as possible, were originally in Pali. It was but natural, consequently, that the speech of the aristocracy, not understood by enough people to be used in public inscriptions, and also often not the vehicle of literary works, since they, even when they finally appeared, were written in the imported Classical Sanskrit, should have completely disappeared to our view from most localities. Finally, when the renewed ascendancy of Brahmanism caused a greater number of persons to understand if not to speak the Brahman language, the Classical Sanskrit, originating in a certain locality and displacing the polite languages of other localities, made its way not only into the inscriptions of Āryāvarta, but to every part of India where Brahman culture was disseminated.